reference inter-alia include identification of measures and policies in the areas of exploration, production, refining, transportation, marketing of Hydrocarbons for rapid development of the industry etc.

The composition of the Group is as follows:—

1. Minister of Finance	—	Chairman
2. Minister of Petroleum & Natural Gas	—	Member
3. Minister of External Affairs	—	do
4. Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission	—	do
5. Secretary to PM	—	Member Secretary

The report is under preparation.

Study for alignment of pipeline from Kochi to Karnataka

2402. SHRI K.C. KONDAIAH: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government of Karnataka have sought a feasibility study to determine the alignment of a pipeline from Kochi to one or a couple of locations in Karnataka; and.

(b) if so, whether Government have taken any decision in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI E. PONNUSWAMY): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Allotement of Distributorship of Indane Gas in Bihar and West **Bengal**

2403. SHRI SHIBU SOREN: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Indian Oil Corporation Ltd. has advertised for the allotment of distributorship of Indane Gas in Bihar and West Bengal about two years back;

(b) if so, the details of the vacancies advertised, category-wise with the details of the names of the places for which distributorship was offered;

(c) the details of the applications received; and

(d) what action has been taken, so far, in this connection and by what time it will be finalised?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI E. PONNUSWAMY): (a) to (d) Indian Oil Corporation had advertised 103 and 39 LPG distributorships in different categories in Bihar and West Bengal respectively two years back. Applications received in response to the advertisement were forwarded to the concerned Dealer Selection Boards. Out of the above LOIs have been issued in 14 cases in Bihar of which 5 LPG distributorships have since been commissioned. As regards West Bengal LOIs have been issued in respect of 12 of which 6 LPG distibutorships have been commissioned. Selection in remaining cases has not been made on account of non-functioning of the Dealer Selection Boards. Dealer Selection Boards have recently been dissolved. It generally takes about 6—12 months for commissioning of dealerships/distributorships form the date of interview.

LPG Agencies in waiting list in Assam

2404. SHRIMATI BASANTI SARMA: Will the Minister of PETROLUEM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of applications for LPG agencies in the waiting list at present in Assam;

(b) the number of LPG agencies allotted till date and the number of LPG dealership still to be allotted to the State; and

(c) the necessary steps being taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI E. PONNUSWAMY): (a) to (c) As on 1.10.1999 there were 148 LPG distibutorships in operation in Assam. In addition to the locations pending from previous marketing plans 69 LPG distributorships have been included in the current marketing plan 1996—98. Locations included in the marketing plans are advertised by the oil marketing companies and selection is made through Dealer Selection Boards. Dealer Selection Boards have recently been dissolved. It generally takes about 6—12 months for commissioning of the dealerships/distributorships from the date of interview.

Subsidies to Petroleum Sector

2405. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the total subsidies to the petroleum sector with item-wise break-up;

(b) the reasons for the subsidies; and